

# Marlborough

## PRESS RELEASE

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## CHU TEH-CHUN DE NEIGE D'OR ET D'AZUR

MARCH 19 - APRIL 19, 2014

OPENING RECEPTION: WEDNESDAY, MARCH 19, 6-8PM

**NEW YORK, NEW YORK:** The Directors of Marlborough Gallery are pleased to announce an exhibition of rare works in Sèvres porcelain by the contemporary Chinese master painter, Chu Teh-Chun. The exhibition will consist of twenty-seven vases that the artist created over a two year period and which were exhibited at the prestigious Guimet Museum of Asian Art in Paris in the summer of 2009. It was the first time that this museum exhibited work by a contemporary artist, and the show at Marlborough will be the first time these exquisite works will be seen in New York.

Chu, who has lived in Paris since 1955, is most likely the last living artist of Chinese émigrés who moved to France in the 50s. The porcelains in this series, which the artist entitled *De Neige, d'Or et d'Azur* (Of Snow, Gold, and Sky Blue) were produced at La Manufacture nationale de Sèvres in 2007 and 2008: each is a unique vase painted by the artist in the famous *bleu de Sèvres* (Sèvres blue) and highlighted with gold. Chu chose an oval form — the model SR 22 of La Manufacture — reminiscent of the famous vases of the Yuan period (13th-14th century) in China. Each of the porcelains was first glazed to prepare the surface for Chu and then painted by the artist with various shades of blue and other colors that were successively hardened in a kiln.



IMAGE: *Vase No. 34*, porcelain, hand painted by the artist with highlights in gold, unique. 14 x 11 x 11 in., 35.6 x 27.9 x 27.9 cm



IMAGE: Chu Teh Chun at the Manufacture de Sèvres

The famous *bleu de Sèvres* —sky blue — is based, like all blue colors used on porcelain, on an ancient Chinese formula imported into France during the 16th century. But since its inception in 1740, La Manufacture de Sèvres has produced its own secret composition of this magical color. Today, no other manufacturer can replicate this color, not even in China. The snow-white porcelain of Sèvres is also exceptionally hard and thin, producing a particular sound and receiving colors like no other. The final layers, the last highlights, were painted by Chu with pure gold paint produced in Sèvres in a very small quantity. With the assistance of the Sèvres *artisans*, three hundred hours of work were necessary to complete each porcelain. A number and a stamp applied on the bottom of every vase identify each work and each is guaranteed by a photographic certificate registered by both La Manufacture de Sèvres and the studio of Chu Teh-Chun.

CONTINUED >>

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During the course of this project, Chu Teh-Chun was assisted by Jean-Paul Desroches, one of the most important experts in Chinese ceramics and Chief Curator of the Chinese department of the Guimet Museum of Asian Art in Paris. Desroches opened for Chu the underground ceramics reserve of the museum and displayed for him the thousands of pieces in the museum's collection; most of them never seen by the public. Through this extraordinary opportunity, Chu revisited the long tradition of porcelain production in China and particularly fell in love with some very important pieces of the Tang (7th-10th century) and Yuan periods. This collaboration between Chu Teh-Chun, La Manufacture de Sèvres, and Desroches is the best example of a modern Chinese painter merging the greatest traditions of two old cultures — the Chinese and the French — in this medium. The form and color of Chu's porcelains emulate in an expressive manner the Tang tradition and the blue and white Chinese tradition of the Yuan period, modernized and improved by La Manufacture de Sèvres. Such collaboration would be impossible to repeat in these ideal conditions. To commemorate this exceptional project, Desroches wrote a book, published by Éditions La Martinière, that documents every step of Chu's creation and which also serves as a catalogue raisonné of the complete series of vases. In the book Desroches states:

*As with his canvases and ink drawings, here Chu's idiom is richly abstract, based on a polyphony of meanings. Given this situation, the beholder is elevated to the role of interpreter — it is up to the beholder, depending on mood, to appreciate or recompose the suggestions offered by the artist. ...Every vase becomes its own microcosm, charged with meanings that shine forth like a faceted gem, sparking reflections and resonances. As an object of meditation, it triggers an enchantment as magical as it is ecstatic.*

Chu Teh-Chun was born in 1920 in Jiangsu Province, China. Since 1958, Chu's work has been the subject of more than one hundred solo exhibitions, including a large traveling show in 1997 at the Museum of Fine Arts, Beijing, which traveled to Hong Kong and Taipei, and retrospectives at the Shanghai Art Museum, 2005, and The Ueno Royal Museum, Tokyo, in 2007. Numerous monographs have been written about his work, most recently by Pierre Cabanne in 2000 and Pierre-Jean Rémy in 2006. Chu was the first artist of Chinese origin to be elected to France's prestigious Institut de France, Académie des Beaux Arts and he is a Chevalier de la Légion d'Honneur.

Chu's work can be found in over fifty museums worldwide, among them the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, France; Fonds National d'Art Contemporain, Paris, France; Guangdong Museum of Art, Canton, China; Musée Cernuschi, Paris, France; Musée d'art moderne de la Ville de Paris, France; Musée des beaux-arts André Malraux, Le Havre, France; Shanghai Museum of Art and the Shanghai Opera House, Shanghai, China.

An illustrated catalogue will be available at the time of the exhibition.



IMAGE: *Vase No. 55*, porcelain, hand painted by the artist with highlights in gold, unique. 14 x 11 x 11 in., 35.6 x 27.9 x 27.9 cm

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### UPCOMING EXHIBITIONS

Santiago Calatrava  
April 24 - May 31, 2014  
opening reception: Wednesday, April 23, 6-8pm

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